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# Demo Roche spies a chance

## Ex-CIA worker 'knows odds'

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ST. JOSEPH — Dan Roche says one of the problems with reportedly being the first former spy to seek federal office in the United States is that any speeches he writes must be cleared by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The solution? Roche lets someone else do the writing.

"Obviously, the agency is antsy about this (candidacy)," said Roche, 64, of 1759 Commonwealth Ave. "I'd rather not write speeches anyway. I'd rather just talk."

The conservative St. Joseph Democrat will oppose Republican Fred Upton, also of St. Joseph, in the Nov. 4 general election for the 4th District congressional seat currently occupied by Mark Siljander.

No Democrat in the traditionally Republican district has won the seat since 1932. Roche said it doesn't bother him that Upton, who upset Siljander in the primary election last month, is heavily favored.

"I'm not saying it's going to be easy but I think I have a chance," Roche said. "Anything can happen. Somebody gets mad over the Whirlpool thing; bad weather ... You never know."

Whirlpool could indeed prove to be a political liability for Upton, since his grandfather was one of the founders of the company and his father is senior vice president for corporate communications, education and government affairs.

Whirlpool recently announced plans to shut down most of its St. Joseph Division, putting about 1,000 employees out of work over the next two years.

Employees who stand to lose their jobs could register their displeasure at the voting booths.

Roche's background is rich and varied. While the secrecy agreement he signed with the CIA prohibits him from revealing details of his involvement with the agency, he is free to talk about his personal experiences during his 22 years as a spy.

Roche said he and his wife, Erma, who took the nickname "Mac" from her maiden name of McDougal, were in Uganda when Idi Amin took power. His wife once had a gun pointed in her face while on a shopping trip in Uganda, Roche said. On another occasion, he said, he and his wife were driving through the country and were stopped four times by members of the rebellious Ugandan Army.

"It's especially difficult when you can't communicate ... but a couple of packs of cigarettes helped out a great deal," Roche recalled.

Actually, Roche said it was because of "sheer cowardice" that he joined the CIA in the first place. He said he had served as a machine gunner in World War II, where his only close call involved a piece of shrapnel that traveled through his raincoat before dropping on his foot. He wasn't anxious to return to the battlefield when conflict broke out in Korea.

Rather than being drafted, Roche said he traveled to Washington, D.C., to try to talk himself into another assignment. CIA officials apparently liked the fact that Roche, a native of Denver, Colo., had a degree in military history from the University of Colorado, and they summoned him in March 1951 from the Junior College of Benton Harbor (now Lake Michigan College) where he was a professor.

"Basically, I was a spy. I was the real McCoy," Roche said. "There was a lot of paperwork and file searches, and you were always looking for people you thought would be useful to you," he said. "But I wasn't shot at — this was long before the days they started shooting diplomats. In fact, I've only had one occasion in my whole life when I had to carry a gun."

Roche spent five years in Germany, three in Switzerland and three more in Kenya before travel-

ing to Uganda for another stint of nearly three years.

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"I saw my career (with the CIA) was about at an end and interesting assignments would be hard to come by," recalled Roche.

He said he left the CIA in 1972 and returned to LMC, where he taught political science, international relations and government before retiring in May.

Roche referred to "Mac," whom he married 38 years ago, as one of his best agents. He said she caught his eye at the University of Colorado, where he went to a great deal of trouble to learn her name.

"I did my first espionage on that," laughed Roche.

They married in Germany and adopted two children, who have since grown to adulthood.

His military experience has made him distrustful of military procurement procedures, said Roche, who said he will work to change them if elected. He remarked his work with the CIA also would make a position on the House Intelligence Committee attractive, but said his chances of getting such an appointment would be slim.

Roche said his venture into politics has given him new insight into the makeup of the 4th District.

"Every place I've gone, people have sneaked up to me and whispered, 'Actually, I'm a Democrat,'" he said. "The problem here is that Democrats are non-voters since they don't think they can win. That's a shame."

If he should win the House seat, Roche promised he would work hard in Congress to establish some realistic priorities for federal spending and attempt to modify new income tax reform legislation to make it more beneficial to the middle-class taxpayer.

Exerting pressure to obtain a nuclear arms control agreement with the Soviets and an answer to the question of how to dispose of nuclear wastes are other burning issues Congress needs to address, Roche said.

Roche estimated he will probably raise a little more than \$20,000 to use against Upton, who in contrast spent \$150,000 or more to defeat Siljander. If he should pull off the upset, Roche said he won't have to look for a place to live since he already owns a house in Washington.

He knows as well as anyone, though, that his difficulty lies in gaining entrance not to his house but the U.S. House.